



Public Utilities Commission
1560 Broadway #250
Denver, CO 80202

February 5, 2019

PUC Proceeding No. 18F-0866E

Commissioners,

The Coalition of Ratepayers submits this letter of support for Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) in its attempt to withdraw from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. Further, the Coalition urges the Public Utilities Commission to set a withdrawal rate that is fair to both Tri-State and DMEA.

The Coalition urges the Commission to consider this request in light of Tri-State's actions, which reject individual autonomy and self-determination, are prohibited by public utility law, and are discriminatory as well as a predatory.

DMEA members understand what is at stake and take responsibility for the outcome that may result from breaking with Tri-State. For better or worse, DMEA and the communities it serves want the ability, nay the responsibility, to choose their generation portfolio. Member owned and operated, rural electric cooperatives are unique in that the individuals served ultimately make the business decisions. Tri-State's refusal undermines and attacks not only DMEA's personal and economic freedom, but the personal and economic freedom of all the rural-electric cooperatives it serves.

Tri-State claims to support freedom of association with a "core principle" of "voluntary and open membership," but in action, rejects it. Tri-State says, "everything we do is member-driven and member-focused." If Tri-State actually held these beliefs, it would have voluntarily approved a fair exit charge and not have stated in its legal filings that members have "no affirmative right to withdraw."

The Coalition believes public utilities law prohibits Tri-State's actions and that it is being discriminatory and predatory. In 2016, Tri-State allowed one of its New Mexico cooperatives, which had the same power contract as DMEA, to withdraw after paying a "fair" exit charge. Three years later, Tri-State asserts it can prevent any withdrawal and is unilaterally setting abusive charges.

The Coalition stands by DMEA and its members' right to self-determination in electric generation and hopes the Commission will set an exit charge that is fair to both parties.

Sincerely,

The Coalition of Ratepayers

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